



The River Review

SPOKANE, WASHINGTON ★ JULY 13-18, 2009

Presented by the Paralyzed Veterans of America and the Department of Veterans Affairs

Photo Courtesy of Spokane Regional CVB/Alan Bisson

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Celebrities Amongst Us

You will be among some celebrities with us this week. They are the 12 Veteran athletes whose pictures grace the boxes of General Mills' Cheerios. For the past two years, event sponsor Veterans Canteen Service has entered into an agreement with General Mills to feature top athletes on the cover of the famous breakfast cereal. This year, there are six featured Veterans and six honorable mentioned Veterans. Let's meet these Games celebrities!

Jake Hipps is a Marine Corps Veteran from Buffalo, N.Y. Jake has attended the Games since 1999, competing in field events as well as basketball, bowling and weightlifting. "I have been to ten Wheelchair Games and each one gets better," Jake says. "I always look forward to seeing my old friends and making new ones, especially our young troops who are just coming home."

Gus Sorenson, a combat Veteran from Sturtevant, Wis., won three gold and two bronze medals last year. He was also the 2008 Spirit of the Games recipient. "I've been disabled for a long time, and I've come to terms with my disability," said Gus. "It's not what you've lost—it's what you have left. Play the hand you're dealt and do what you can with it." Gus enjoys competing in quad rugby, table tennis and field events.

Other featured Veterans include Tamara Lawter of Kearney, Neb., who took home five gold medals last year; Eric Cameron from San Antonio, Texas, who is one of the few Coast Guard Veterans present at the Games; Ruth Kult, an Air Force Veteran from Fairview Heights, Ill.; and "Rollin' Joe" Velasquez, a Navy Veteran from Turlock, Calif., and the 2007 Spirit of the Games recipient.

General Mills also chose to highlight six additional Veterans. Michael Savicki, a Navy Veteran from Cornelius, N.C.; Patrick Peterson, Army Veteran from Fairhope, Alaska; Army Veteran Rory Cooper from Gibsonia, Pa.; Jerry Shields, Army and National Guard Veteran from Jacksonville, Fla.; Ray Brown, Marine Corps Veteran from North Branch, Mich.; and Patricia LaBar, Army Veteran from Heath, Texas, have all been awarded honorable mention status.

General Mills packaged 120,000 boxes which were sold exclusively in military commissaries and through Veterans Canteen Services. They went on sale in March of this year and sold out by April.

Many of these Veterans have received media attention because of their Cheerios box debut. TV stations and newspapers from across the country have taken notice of these outstanding athletes and over 60 stories have featured your very own Wheelchair Games comrades. So, if you strive for the gold this week while keeping in mind the true spirit of the Games, who knows ... you just might find your smiling face on a Cheerios box sometime soon!



On March 13 a special meet and greet was held at the Michael E. DeBakey VA Medical Center in Houston to honor Patricia "Trish" LaBar, U.S. Army Veteran, who was featured on a Cheerios box.



Block Party Tonight

Athletes, families and coaches are invited to this year's Block Party at C.I. Shenanigan's, a popular steak and seafood restaurant in a picturesque setting along the Spokane River. The event takes place this evening from 4:30 to 8:30 p.m., with dinner being served in the parking lot until 6:30 p.m.

C.I. Shenanigan's is located just north of the Convention Center exhibition hall. You can reach it by taking the Centennial Trail by the river, or through the Convention Center parking lot.

The menu includes some great picnic-type foods including hamburgers, veggie burgers, German sausage, Caesar salad, baked beans and corn on the cob. Funnel cakes and Mississippi mud pies are the featured desserts and assorted soft drinks will also be available. A cash bar will be open in the restaurant.

Entertainment will be provided until 8:30 p.m. with two live bands, Fall Side and Silver Treason. There will also be a street entertainer and door prizes! Enjoy the food, fun and festivities this evening!

The block party is being sponsored by the National Veterans Wheelchair Games local host sponsor, Veterans Canteen Service.



Thanks to Games Presenters!

Each year, the VA and Paralyzed Veterans of America (PVA) co-present the National Veterans Wheelchair Games. Both share a strong and longstanding commitment to supporting America's Veterans with disabilities.

In 1981, VA founded the event and for the 28 years since has continued to support this rehabilitation program for Veterans who use wheelchairs due to spinal cord injuries, amputations or neurological problems.



The event is a great example for all Americans of the will and determination of America's Veterans and the way they drive on when facing difficult challenges. Representatives of VA help with organizing the event every year, watch over the competitions, provide event and national officials, oversee the Opening Ceremony functions, prepare the national Web site and daily newsletters, and collaborate with the host VA medical center in planning

the event. Coaches and therapists from VA facilities across the country join their teams at the Games and work with their athletes all year to prepare them for competition. Many other VA employees and volunteers are at the event this week as well, working in different areas to ensure a wonderful experience for every athlete.

According to the Secretary of Veterans Affairs, Eric Shinseki, "those who witness these Veterans' performances, whether or not they earn a medal, cannot leave this event unaffected. Each participant is a true inspiration to all of us."

Paralyzed Veterans of America have co-presented the Games since 1985, and the team from that organization works just as tirelessly to make the Games better every year. On a national level, PVA takes care of the registration process for athletes, coordinates the Sponsor Dinner and Closing Ceremony activi-

ties, prepares the posters and other graphic products, arranges for hotels, helps coordinate Kids' Day and oversees an extensive corporate sponsor program that helps make sure there are resources for a great event each year. On a local level, PVA chapters from across the country also sponsor teams of athletes, making sure that each member is ready and able to attend.

"Our association with the National Veterans Wheelchair Games helps fulfill our promise of improving the quality of life for Veterans with disabilities," said National President of PVA, Randy L. Pleva. "As the wheelchair athletes assemble in Spokane, the intensity of competition will be exceeded only by the fellowship of Veterans united together."

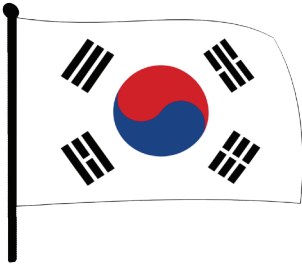
Both VA and PVA work together on nearly every aspect of this national program, and it's really that close collaboration and partnership that make the Games so successful year after year.



Wheelchair Repair

The Wheelchair Repair Shop is located at the Doubletree Hotel Suite B and is open daily from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. through Saturday, July 18. Hours will be extended as necessary. Service for minor repairs will be available at the Spokane Convention Center and all off-site venues from 8 a.m., through the end of the final event. Wheelchair repair will also be present at airport arrival and departure times. If you need emergency wheelchair repair after hours, please call 993-6242.

Welcome International Guests



We are pleased to introduce some very special guests to the Games this week. Delegates from the Korean Disabled Veterans Organization (KDVO) arrived in Spokane on Saturday, July 11 and are staying until Friday to observe the Games in preparation for a similar event taking place in Korea in 2011.

The Korean Disabled Veterans Sports Council (KD-VSC), a division of the KDVO, will host the 2011 World Wheelchair Games in Suwon, Korea, and are here to learn how to plan and implement an event of this size in their country. Representatives of the Korean organization

were pleased to attend the Opening Ceremonies and Welcome Reception on Monday evening, and are spending time at many of the sports events throughout their time at the Games.

The KDVO is an organization devoted to Korean military Veterans. A total of nine delegates are in Spokane learning about the Games this week.

We are honored to introduce our international visitors to the National Veterans Wheelchair Games. Please help us welcome them to our event.

Thank our Volunteers!

To host an event like the National Veterans Wheelchair Games, it takes thousands of dedicated volunteers whose assignments run the gamut from distributing water to helping with meals, transportation, event set-up and all things in between. This year, you can help us recognize the efforts of the 3,000 Spokane volunteers through a new initiative to thank them. All participating athletes received some special stickers in their registration packets that they can give to any volunteer who they feel has done an outstanding job during the Games. When the week concludes, the volunteer with the most stickers will be eligible for a special award. Without our volunteers, this event just could not happen. Help us recognize all of our outstanding volunteers this week by participating in this new program.



Q ~ While pushing my wheelchair to the convention center this week, I've been having these sudden shooting pains through my wrist and going up my arm. I thought it was a passing muscle cramp, but now I wonder if it's something else. -- Wristful Thinking



A ~ Dear Wristful: You most likely have carpal tunnel syndrome, a painful disorder of the wrist and hand. The carpal tunnel is a narrow tunnel formed by the bones and other tissues of your wrist. This tunnel protects your median nerve, which gives you feeling in your thumb, index and middle fingers. But when other tissues in the carpal tunnel, such as ligaments and tendons get swollen, they press against the median nerve. That pressure can make part of your hand hurt, feel numb, or even cause your grip strength to weaken.

People with this condition usually complain of pain or numbness and tingling in the first three fingers on the thumb side of the underside of the hand. The symptoms are particularly prominent at night and may wake you up, feeling the need to "shake out" your hand or wrist.

Of course people who use manual wheelchairs place an excessive amount of weight-bearing strain on their upper extremities. This increases the prevalence of carpal tunnel syndrome, which increases with the length of time using a manual chair. The condition is present in up to 75% of wheelchair users. When you propel a wheelchair, perform frequent transfers, or regularly carry out wheelchair pressure reliefs (to prevent pressure sores) by lifting yourself with your wrists in maximum extension, this puts you at risk for carpal tunnel problems.

Here are some tips that may help prevent carpal tunnel syndrome:

- If you do the same tasks with your hands over and over, try not to bend, extend or twist your hands for long periods.
- Don't work with your arms too close or too far from your body.
- Don't rest your wrists on hard surfaces for long periods.
- Switch hands during work tasks.
- Take regular breaks from repeated hand movements to give your hands and wrists time to rest.
- Breathe in slowly and deeply, allow your arms to hang loosely, and shake for a couple of seconds to relax your arms and hands.
- Finally, for Pete's sake, take time to relax and enjoy the beautiful scenery of Spokane!

Dr. Dan (Ghostwriter: Dr. Denis F. Castillo)



"Dr. Daniel Scott, Medical Director of the Wheelchair Games, is a staff physician at the VA Eastern Colorado Health Care System in Denver. Here's what he and his team have to say about today's topic."



Opening Ceremonies...





Air Compassion for Veterans



Air Compassion for Veterans (ACV) is an organization with a mission to ensure that no financially-stressed wounded Veteran, active duty military, or family member is denied access to distant specialized medical services or rehabilitation because of financial need. ACV

provides 300 to 400 free flights monthly.

ACV, a special program of Medical Mercy Airlift, has been operating for 35 years and began serving Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF) and Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF) Veterans in November 2006. They have flown a total of 9,857 missions.

Judy V. Shiflett, ACV outreach assistant, says the program makes the "recovery and health-care delivery for those Veterans more complete."

Providing transportation service to the National Veterans Wheelchair Games is a first for ACV this year. "This event is part of our Veterans' comprehensive health care – it's therapeutic rehab for the whole body," Shiflett said. "The Games will enhance their independence, and contribute to their overall health and well-being."

Four OIF Veterans attending the Games through sponsorship from ACV are: Todd Morand and his wife, Sara of Siler City, N.C.; Lucritia Gayle and her attendant of Washington, D.C.; Rick Messer of Phoenix City, Ala.; and Anthony Alegre of Gray, Ga. Thank you, ACV!

Please visit www.aircompassionforveterans.org for more information.

Wednesday, July 15



Wednesday's Meal Hours
SCC, Ballroom 100 A/B/C
and C.I. Shenanigan's
(dinner)

Breakfast	6 - 8 a.m.
Lunch	10:30 a.m. - 1:30 p.m.
Block Party	4:30 - 6:30 p.m.

Breakfast

Scrambled eggs, hash brown potatoes, bacon, sausage, grilled ham, biscuits & gravy, oatmeal, cold cereal, fresh fruit, muffins, Danish, fresh juice, coffee, hot tea and milk

Today's Option:

Waffles with Maple Syrup

Lunch

Fresh salad bar (lettuce, cherry tomatoes, cheddar cheese, croutons, sunflower seeds, beets, assorted beans), potato salad, fresh vegetables, dinner rolls assorted desserts, coffee, iced tea with lemons and milk

Today's Option:

Grilled Pork Chops or Grilled Chicken with Basil Pesto Cream and Wild Rice Blend

Dinner - Block Party at C.I. Shenanigans

Choice of hamburger, bratwurst, veggie burger, or caesar salad with baguette; baked beans and corn on the cob; funnel cake or mud pie; assorted bottled sodas; cash bar available inside restaurant

Meals for the Games end Saturday at lunch.

Athletes and others receiving complimentary meals will use a debit card issued by the Spokane Convention Center (SCC). The card will be loaded daily with a balance of \$46 for your meals for that day (except on today (\$26), Friday (\$30) and Saturday (\$26) due to the Games schedule.) Any amount not used will be zeroed out at the end of the day. You may use your debit card at the concession stands or in the Games cafeteria located in SCC, Ballroom 100 A/B/C. Guests and family members may purchase food items in the cafeteria or at the concession stands.

SCC concession stands are located in the back of Group Health Exhibit A and in Riverside Hall D. Food available includes: muffins, Danish, bagels, cookies, soft drinks, juice, coffee, yogurt, milk, pretzels, nachos, french fries, bratwurst, German sausage, hamburgers, grilled chicken breasts, deli sandwiches, chef salad and kettle chips.

Please watch *The River Review* daily for more information on the daily menu and the meal exceptions for today, Friday and Saturday.

Medical suites are located at the **Doubletree Hotel Room 1102 and Davenport Towers Room 1655**. They will close Saturday, July 18 at 10:30 p.m. Medical assistance will be available at all times.

For athletes staying at the Courtyard by Marriott, Fairfield Inn, Oxford Suites or Travelodge, medical assistance will be available nightly from 11:30 p.m. to 7:30 a.m. If an athlete has a medical emergency during this time, call the hotel operator and they will communicate with the physician on-call. At other times Veterans should go to the medical suites located at the Doubletree, Davenport Towers or at the Spokane Convention Center (SCC).

The **medical suite at the SCC** opens daily at 7 a.m. until the last event at the SCC has ended each day. In the case of a life-threatening emergency, please have the hotel operator call 911.

Only registered athletes or registered volunteers on duty may be treated by Games' medical staff. A list of local emergency clinics and hospitals will be available for family members who need medical assistance.

Awards Presentation Schedule

Medals will be awarded in two ways:

1. For Team events with a clear first, second and third place, medals will be awarded at the venue immediately after the competition.

Awards will be presented immediately upon completion for the following events: Super G, Power Soccer, Basketball, Quad Rugby and Softball.

2. For events that require the results to be tabulated, medal presentations will be delayed. Medals for these events will be presented in the Convention Center, Riverside D, on the following dates and times. Once results are confirmed, they will be posted on the TV monitors located in the Convention Center.



Awards Schedule	
Wednesday, July 15	9:30 a.m. – 8 p.m.
Thursday, July 16	9:30 a.m. – 8:30 p.m.
Friday, July 17	9:30 a.m. – 10 p.m.
Saturday, July 18	11 a.m. – 5 p.m.



Don't leave the Games without your memorabilia items! Visit Convention Center, Room 103 for fantastic hats, towels, sports bags, mugs, water bottles, shirts and more.

The National Veterans Wheelchair Games bring together wheelchair athletes from all over the nation (and beyond), representing all branches of the military service. Take the time to meet as many as you can. Here is a little information about five of your fellow competitors at this week's Games. Take time to look them up, since they all are "Someone You Should Know." Today's column focuses on four of the 47 women Veterans competing this week.



Terri Fuda, 38, from Gillespie, Ill., doesn't claim to be a natural athlete – in fact, she says she was the classic "last kid to be picked" on the playground. But when Fuda, an Air Force Veteran, was

introduced to aquatic therapy by her rehabilitation counselors, a fierce competitor was born. She now excels in the air guns competition, which is her favorite event, and also participates in bowling, discus and javelin. "The Games have helped me find my passion and have been a pathway to a new lease on life," said Fuda. This week, Fuda is packing as many activities in each day as possible so she can get up and do it all over again.



Laura Schwanger is returning to the Wheelchair Games this year after an extended leave to concentrate on her responsibilities with the U.S. Olympic Committee and the U.S. Paralympic Team. Schwanger, 50, from Mantua,

N.J., has attended several Wheelchair Games and was selected as the "Spirit of the Games" award winner in 2001. For this Army Veteran, sports have always been part of her life and she will compete this week in softball, shot-put, discus, javelin and slalom.

"I believe it's my mission to encourage other disabled individuals, particularly women Veterans, to participate in the Games," said Schwanger.



The saying that great things come in small packages certainly describes Melanie Downing. At about five feet tall and 82-years young, this Navy Veteran from Santa Monica, Calif., is giddy with excitement about this week.

Downing believed the Games would offer an opportunity to travel to places she had always dreamed of seeing, and she's found the experience a true treasure. "The Games are the most awesome experience of my life," Downing said. "Never before have I witnessed such positive energy. Being able to attend is truly a blessing." This week marks Downing's fourth time at the Games, competing in bowling, slalom, the powerchair relay and the motorized wheelchair rally.



Patricia McQuinn, 52, from Kettering, Ohio, has always loved sports and the challenge, competition and special camaraderie shared among team members. McQuinn, an Army Veteran, first experienced the thrill of team sports playing high school volleyball.

That passion was rekindled when she joined the Dayton Matters Veterans Sports Team. McQuinn said, "The Dayton Team feels more like a family than a team. We train and work all year in preparation for the Veterans Games." She was hooked when she attended her first National Veterans Wheelchair Games last year. This week, McQuinn is challenging fellow athletes in track, field, air guns and quad rugby. As much as McQuinn loves to compete, being a member of a team is what it's all about for her.

Wednesday Schedule:	
Departures sites	Time
Hotels to SCC Hub and back entrance, and return to Hotels	5:15 a.m. and every 15 minutes until 10 p.m.
The Hub to Whitworth Swimming Facility	7 until 8:30 a.m. every 15 minutes
Whitworth Swimming Facility to SCC	10:30 a.m. until Noon every 15 minutes
The Hub to Lilac Lanes and North Bowl Bowling	2:30 – 4 p.m. every 15 minutes
Lilac Lanes and North Bowl Bowling to Hub	2:30 until 4 p.m. every 15 minutes
Last bus departs Hub to hotels	10:15 p.m.